

Leela looks quite cute in the Edwardian dress, with the bonnet and short jacket - hints of a sailor suit. It's much better than the Victorian outfit in 'Talons', with her long hair in its natural state. So it's tempting to start the story off with a spanking scene, before she changes in the lighthouse. Let's assume she's already been over the Doctor's knee several times, and the purpose of the scene is to reestablish their relationship at the very start of a new season, and to indicate a few developments to come in the way of making her gradually more civilized.

So let's start the story with a character scene in the TARDIS. The Doctor is looking forward to arriving in Brighton. Leela is not so happy. Once again the Doctor has ordered her to dress in strange, heavy clothes that restrict her movement. She loses no opportunity to needle him as he sets the controls: it's no surprise that they don't actually make it to Brighton. 'Any more of this, Leela, and somebody will be arriving in Brighton with a sore bottom.' (Tom Baker was reportedly very crabby with Louise Jameson on the set of this story, so maybe that would feed into the acting here.) Leela stifles a gasp of fearful anticipation. 'A sound spanking?' she says. (In most of her stories, Leela has a very acute memory for phrases. Here I'm assuming that the Doctor talked about giving her 'a sound spanking' back in 'The Face of Evil' and the phrase stuck in her head.) 'Yes,' he replies as the TARDIS starts to land. 'Now get yourself ready, you'll like Brighton.'

'Getting ready' for Leela means preparing her weapons. She slips her knife into her boot, then curses the long dress which gives her no pocket for her janis thorns. The Doctor looks up from the controls and sees her with the thorns. In previous stories he has told her several times: 'no more janis thorns, or I'll put you across my knee and spank you - hard!' Leela won't hand them over. Leela duly gets her first spanking of the season, with her long dress raised. After which the Doctor dumps the thorns in the TARDIS incinerator. All this explains why a) Leela is in such a grouchy mood when they arrive on Fang Rock: 'You said I would like Brighton. Well I do not.' and b) why the janis thorns don't appear in the Season 15 stories.

Well, that's just a little season opener, like the White Guardian scenes in 'The Ribos Operation'. Now we get on with the story proper, which includes a few stern threats from the Doctor to keep the spanking theme in the air. But there's no privacy on a lighthouse, and the Doctor's remarks raise a few eyebrows among the shipwrecked Edwardians, especially Adelaide. 'It's positively grotesque,' she declares. 'Has that Doctor no inkling of the correct way to treat a woman?' Leela in her turn is far from impressed by Adelaide. 'You will be quiet,' she tells her, 'or I will give you a sound spanking!' And so she does, later on when Adelaide gets hysterical over the deaths: where on TV Leela slapped her face, in my version she turns her over her knee, whips up her skirt and efficiently spanks her bloomers as Skinsale looks on amazed.

But Leela has been building up black marks herself, and the final straw comes when they are escaping and she disobeys the Doctor's order not to look back at the exploding Rutan spacecraft. The Doctor struggles back to the TARDIS with his blinded companion. A quick examination of

her eyes shows him that the condition isn't permanent. All she needs is something to shock the nerves back into life. Taking Leela by the scruff of the neck he turns her over his knee and brings his hand cracking down on the perfect skin-tight seat of her black trousers, once, twice, three times. Stifling a few sobs of pain, Leela tells the Doctor that her eyes have cleared, just as he told her. The Doctor says that maybe this will teach her to have more trust in him. He told her not to look back, and she disobeyed. Not for the first time that night. He raises his hand again. The story is over, having come full circle, but Leela's spanking has only just begun...